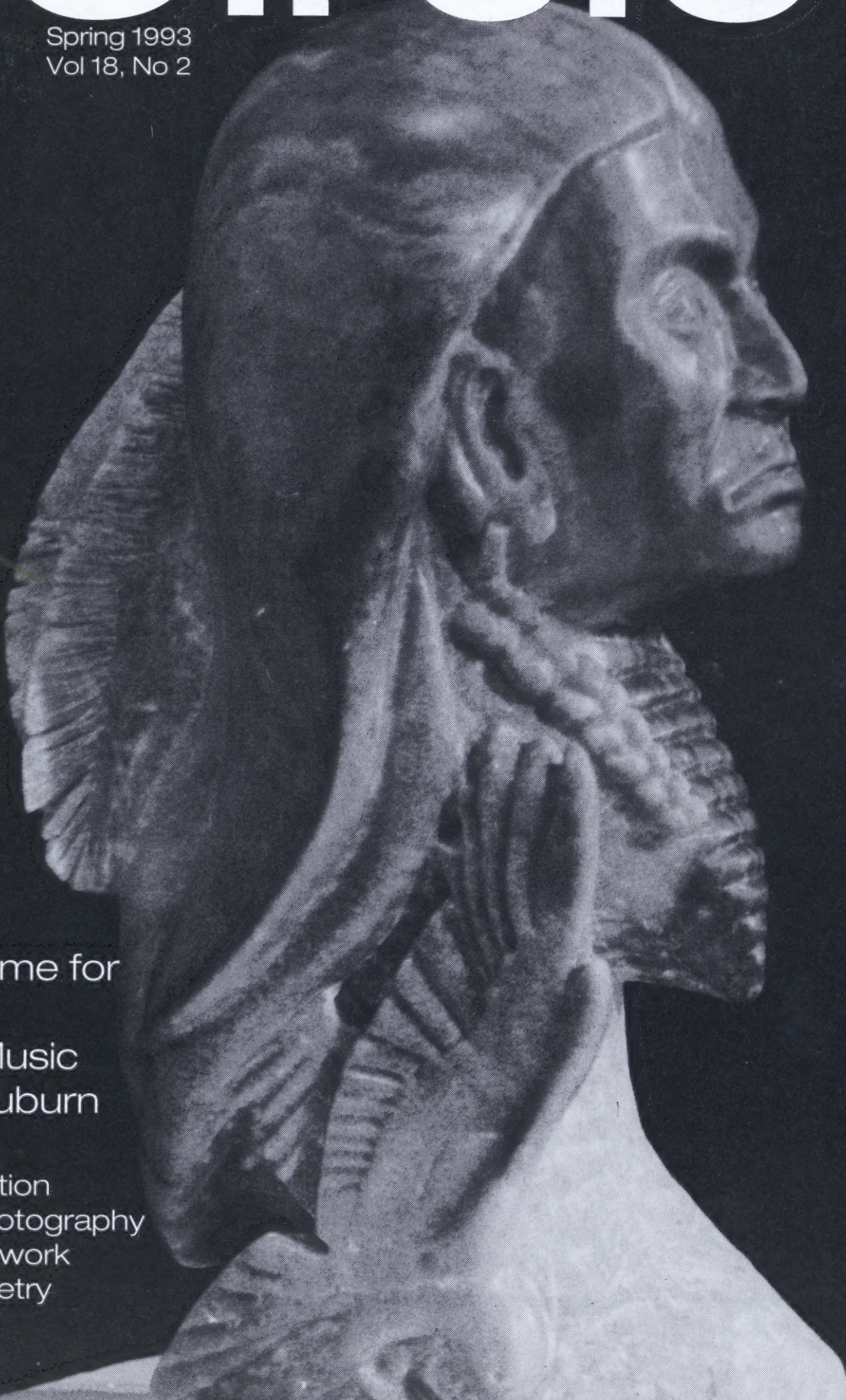


# The Auburn Circle

Spring 1993  
Vol 18, No 2



A New Home for  
Tiger  
Country Music  
and Auburn

Plus: Fiction  
Photography  
Artwork  
Poetry



# Contributors

**Emily Brown** is a senior in art from Montgomery. Nothing further is known about her at this time.

**Dolly Campbell** is a senior majoring in English. She is from New Orleans, Louisiana, and says that writing, to her, is "therapeutic." Eventually, she wants to become a youth minister and continue writing on the side. She is a member of Mortar Board, Student Recruiters, Cardinal Key and just about everything else.

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**Kevin Davis** is a senior in Art from Tinson, who his roommate describes as a "geek with talent."

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**Lisa Griffin** is a junior majoring in English from Cordova, Tennessee. She is the assistant news editor for *The Auburn Plainsman*.

**Brian Helms** is a graduate student and former head Alpha Phi Omega eagle trainer (1992-1993). He co-authored *The Compleat War Eagle Training Manual*, which is in the special collections department of the Ralph B. Draugh Library.

**John Mouton** is the department head for Building Science in the School of Architecture.

**Eric Palm** is a sophomore in Business. You can hear his voice throughout the Auburn metropolitan area on WEGL 91.1 FM. He is the People Editor of the *Glomerata*.

**Adam Perschall** is a senior in Art, and says that he enjoys having no life and hanging out at Biggin Hall.

**Kristan Potter** was not available for comment. We assume that she is a student at Auburn. If you have any information on her, please contact the proper authorities.

**Roger A. Pritchett** is a recent graduate from Auburn in the School of Architecture.

**Jason Sanford** read Perrin's bio, and is also looking for female companionship, preferably on a non-committal sexual basis. He is a senior in Anthropology, and will graduate in fall of 1993. Presents of obscene amounts of money can be made out to him in care of *The Auburn Circle*.

**Dina Smith**, who enjoys writing and costume design, said, "I don't want a career, so I majored in English."

**Jason Smith** is a photographer for *The Auburn Plainsman*. He is a junior majoring in Corporate Journalism.

**Ashley Wright** is a sophomore in Business. He is also the editor of the *Glomerata*. If you would like another copy of the 1992 *Glomerata*, he would be happy to get one for you. He would also love it if you wanted to join staff—just come down to the office and pester him about it sometime.

**Brandon Wright**, in addition to being Ashley's twin brother, is a sophomore in Chemical Engineering. He currently serves as a SGA senator and enjoys taking pictures of squirrels eating potato chips. \*



The Auburn Circle  
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*Untitled*  
Kristan Potter

On the cover  
*Little Hawk*  
alabaster sculpture  
by Kevin Davis





If you think about it too much, you could believe you were lying on the coroner's table getting ready for an autopsy instead of here on Napoleon Avenue at Dr. Terezakis' office of Dermatology, 9th floor. But what is worse about this is you are not dead, and they don't give you an anesthetic. So, as I lie here on top of this table, papered pillow underneath my head, I try not to think about what they are going to do to me. Instead I think, Why am I here? Why am I not as pretty as Grace or Paula, who are at the mall without me? Why is the sky blue? Hell, why does rain fall? I don't know why; the fact is I am here and have to be for at least an hour of treatment that Mother swears will make me beautiful.

I think of Grace and Paula and the rest of my friends who are at the mall right now. Paula's mom drops us off every Saturday at ten, right when it opens. She goes to the grocery store while we go to the cosmetic department. Grace tries on all of the lipsticks while Paula stuffs perfume samples in her purse. I usually put base on my cheeks and forehead. Grace and Paula don't ever talk about my face, but I catch them looking at me all the time. I know what they are thinking. They are so glad it's not their faces. When they are finished buying makeup, we go

to The Crazy Horse or The Lemon Tree. My favorite place is Kreeger's because the clothes are bright and the lighting is low. When you stand in front of the mirror there, no one can really see your face, and you can pretend you are a high fashion model. Mom says that's what all the big agents in New York look for — blemishless skin. If I keep coming to Terezakis enough, Mom said I might get the same glances people give

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***... Why am I here?  
Why am I not as  
pretty as Grace  
or Paula ...***

---

models when I walk down the street. She said I have the potential to be pretty. Every night, I pray she is right.

I'm lying on the table when an unfamiliar nurse walks in. She says, "Good morning, Mary! How are you today?" Her pleasant voice at 9 a.m. makes me know she's new. I always tell Paula, "No one smiles around here much unless they are new. After your first visit, it's hard to smile."

"Is it going to take long today?" I ask.

"We don't like to keep you too

long, we know how busy teenage girls are!" She giggles and pulls out a razor blade and a pressure pin. She opens the cotton gauze pads, and the disinfecting alcohol seeps into my nostrils from across the room. I'm thinking about calling Mom to come and get me, telling her I threw up in the lobby's bathroom and never made it to the office. Maybe there's enough time, I think, to have Zeke, my brother, pick me up, and I can meet the others for the one o'clock movie. Every Saturday we all go to the matinee after we shop at the mall. Tom, Grace's boyfriend, picks out the movie with the most sex and violence. Roger, Paula's brother, likes the westerns. And Zeke likes the romances because I like them. I like the pretty women with their sexy voices and beautiful skin, their lovers always stroking their faces and saying, "What did I do to deserve such a perfect woman like you?"

When Zeke dropped me off this morning, he smiled and said, "Hey, we won't go see the movie until you get back. That is, if you feel up to it. I know how you feel after you visit her." Then he leaned over and tried to find a soft place on my face to kiss me. I held my breath as I got out of the car, entered the building and pressed the button for the ninth floor.



I watched Zeke's Bronco merge into traffic.

Dr. Terezakis walks in. She is wearing heels and an angora dress. Other days she wears a silk blouse and suede skirt. Her complexion is flawless.

"Hello, Mary." Her brown eyes

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***Her eyes contact mine. I feel she can tell I hate being here, so I look away.***

---

study my face. She puts on her rubber gloves and as I glance in the mirror on the other side of the room, I know it is going to be a long session. "Have you been taking the Acutane?" She lifts her hands to my face, and her fingers massage it.

"Yes, ma'am." I'm watching her hands in the mirror. They move slowly and meticulously, feeling out the bumps and curves, testing for places where my own nails and fingertips have poked and pushed tiny blackheads out of their hiding spots.

Her eyes contact mine. I feel she can tell I hate being here, so I look away.

She smiles gently and says, "It's looking good!"

"Looking good?" I say. "It doesn't look any different than the last time I was here." This is my third visit to see her. The red acne covers my face from forehead to chin, not to mention the inside of my ears and the backs of my shoulders. "Mary, lie down on the table and answer some questions for Alice. I'll be right back." I realize I have at least ten more minutes before she begins, and so I think, there's still time to back out. The past three

times I've never made it through a full session. The nurse usually calls Mom for me after the first break.

"Mary, have you been taking any other medicine besides the Acutane?" The nurse bats her eyes and hesitates, like she does not know how to phrase the question.

"No, I'm not on birth control." The medicine I've been swallowing whole-heartedly for the past four months is the strongest on the market. When you start on it, they give you this pamphlet to read about what happens to babies who are born during the course of the treatment. Pictures of little fetuses with only five fingers, or three ears, or no hands are sketched in detail. On the cover of every pull tab for the pills is a pregnant lady with an X marked through her. It is pretty serious medicine. If you are on birth control, Terezakis wants to know. Mom told me she thinks I'll have a boyfriend soon, after treatment. If I had a boyfriend now, though, I would not fool around. When I look at those pictures, I get really scared. I don't think I could stand it if my kids weren't perfect.

"Are you having monthly periods?" Alice blushes and turns to face the mirror. She's watching me in it, and I stare right back.

"Yes, I am." This medicine is so strong it dries up all of your fluids and leaves you always wanting a glass of water. You are supposed to drink a lot of water every day. I once read a story in the office, while waiting for Terezakis to start, about a girl whose medicine was too strong, and it dried up her insides. She never told the doctor, and she can't ever have kids. I want at least two.

Alice moves toward me, alcoholic gauze at the end of her fingertips. She presses gently on my face, rubbing the alcohol all over. I close

my eyes and breath in deep. The alcohol burns clean through my nose and leaves me feeling light-headed. Tears rise to my eyes. I look up at Alice. She smiles. "It's OK," she says. "You'll get better. I used to have really bad skin too."

"I don't believe that," I tell her. Alice's skin is so pretty and smooth you could use her for a make over in the cosmetic department demonstrations. Her forehead is soft. Her blemishless skin is tight across her high cheek bones. She probably has a boyfriend who takes her dancing on Saturday nights, I think.

Terezakis enters the room. She has her operating face on. Without a word said, she grasps the razor blade and pressure pin off of the counter and heads toward me. She places the magnifying glass with its surrounding fluorescent tube of light over my face, and I close my eyes and try to think of anything in the world besides being here.

The torture has begun. The pressure pin pushes deep into my forehead - 10, 15, 16 times. With small, meticulous movements, Terezakis

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***... as I glance in the mirror on the other side of the room, I know it is going to be a long session.***

---

pops every pimple I never had. She pushes and pushes until I know my forehead is going to give way and my skull will crack open. Inside, I picture little men -- all are of the guys who sit behind the cafeteria and smoke during lunch with Zeke and make fun of girls like me. They

(Continued on page 6)



are clogging up my pores, smoking cigarettes and causing blackheads to rise. Once I brought Zeke his lunch he'd forgotten on the bus. One of his friends said, "Hey Pimples, what you got for me?" He was fat and had bright red hair. He looked like he was sunburned. I turned around and said, "Listen, you're gonna regret the fact you're fat and ugly one day. Keep it up, and I'll never go out with you." Zeke patted my back and whispered, "Good one." Mom taught me that.

My hands were folded across my stomach loosely when Terezakis started. But now, they feel cold and clammy and begin to slip as I try to squeeze them for comfort. There is a pause in her rhythm. I hear the clinking of the pin as she places it on top of the glass and picks up the razor blade, which means she's found a scab. Carefully pulling away the dried skin above my eyebrow, Terezakis pushes the pin in far. I feel the blemish explode. She places a tissue and asks me to hold it. I don't hear her.

"Mary, please hold this tissue in place while I continue," she repeats. Without opening my eyes, I place two fingers on the bloody tissue.

The closer she gets to my temples, the more I squirm. She begins a conversation. "So, how's your soccer team doing? Won many games?"

I take a deep breath and speak almost clearly. "Yes, ... We've won both of the ones we've played so far." With the words out, I can concentrate on the pain.

"You know my son used to play at your high school. His name is Anthony. Do you remember him?"

"Yes, ... Ma'am." Anthony was a nerdy boy who played the violin. He was a year older than Zeke. As

the pain gets to be almost unbearable, I imagine Zeke beating up Anthony even though I know he

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***The razor blade  
shoots through  
my skin ... Tears  
run down my  
cheeks and I be-  
gin to sniffle.***

---

never would. She continues down one side of my face, pushing the pressure pin in every two seconds.

I'm about to ask her what happened to Anthony when she hits a nerve. The razor blade shoots through my skin and my whole face electrifies. Tears run down my cheeks, and I begin to sniffle. I cannot cry. I promised myself I wouldn't. The pushing has stopped. I open my eyes and try to focus through my tears.

"You know, acne is like a dripping faucet," Terezakis says. "You have to work every day to keep it turned off. It won't come back as long as you concentrate on it." She

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***I cannot cry. I  
promised myself I  
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to focus through  
my tears.***

---

wants to be kind. She pats my hands that are sweaty and rough from my squeezing them. She hands me a tissue and turns off the magnifying

glass. "You have to tell me when the pain is too much. We can always take a break. I'll be back in a minute." She hands me a *Glamour* magazine to read while I rest. The door closes behind her. I think of Alice and how much she went through. I wonder about her and her boyfriend. "If I was a boy, I'd ask girls out all the time. No one likes to sit in the movies alone," I once told Paula. "I think it would be nice to hold a boy's hand in the movies, in the dark."

I flip through the magazine. Models advertise clothes, cars, jewelry. One is holding a pack of Virginia Slims. "You've Come a Long Way Baby," the ad says. I sigh and try to calculate how many more pills I have and how many more visits there are until treatment is over. About two months. That is eight more weeks, and the school dance is in 10 weeks; Grace has it marked on her calendar. Only three months until school lets out.

Alice pokes her head in the door. "Want me to call your Mom for you?"

I hesitate and glance down at the model. "Did you go to your school dance?"

"No, not at first," she tells me. "But I did later, when I was older. I met a guy named Frank. He took me to all the dances."

"I'll stay a little bit longer," I tell her, even though I know that Mom would not be surprised if I called. I guess she kind of expects it. I wonder if she would stay for the whole treatment. Grace wouldn't have the courage; Paula would never need to. But, I'm here, and I feel I might as well finish it out. Zeke will have to watch the movie without me, I think. Tomorrow, if my face isn't too swollen, I'll go to the mall by myself and see the matinee. ☀



## Oldness

by R. Perrin Ehlinger

I think when I grow old,  
I'll want to die.  
But right now, I don't want to  
because I'm not old yet.  
Sometimes, though, I feel real old—  
The years have not been light  
on my shoulders  
and when I pause at  
a youthful crowd  
not much younger than I,  
my words are politely  
ignored  
and my presence  
is shifted aside  
as the circle tightens  
without me.  
Much like grandfather was  
at Christmas.  
That's when I feel old  
and I want to die.



*Waterfall*

Lisa Griffin





PHOTOGRAPHS BY JASON SMITH



# A New Home for Tiger

TIGER

by Brian Helms

The story of the War Eagle is a colorful one that contains the many shady details that are crucial to any good legend. An unnamed Confederate soldier from Alabama is said to have found an injured golden eagle after the battle of the Wilderness as he wandered no-man's land alone. He took the bird into his care and named her "Anvre." Several years later, the soldier became a faculty member at East Alabama Male college and was a familiar sight on campus with Anvre. On February 20, 1892, Anvre broke free from his master during Auburn's first football game, which was played against the University of Georgia at Atlanta's Piedmont Park. Anvre began to circle the field inciting a chant of "War Eagle!" from the Auburn fans and helped inspire the team to rally to defeat Georgia 10-0. At the end of the game, Anvre crashed to the playing field giving up her life to the spirit of Auburn. The cry "War Eagle!" has continued to be heard on Auburn's plains for 100 years as a remembrance of that fighting spirit.

Since the very first War Eagle, there have been five golden eagles that have represented Auburn. War Eagle II had a limited stay at Auburn University in 1930 when a farmer found a golden eagle en-

tangled in a mass of pea vines in Bee Hive, Alabama. She is said to have attended at least one football



***... giving up her  
life to the spirit of  
Auburn.***

game, but her stay at Auburn was short because of the cost of her upkeep. In 1960, a cotton-picker found an injured golden eagle in Curry Station, Alabama. Jon Bowden, a brother of Alpha Phi Omega, volun-

teered to care for the bird, who became War Eagle III. She attended numerous school functions before escaping in 1964. She was found shot to death near Birmingham. War Eagle IV was obtained by the Birmingham Downtown Action Committee from a Jackson, Mississippi, zoo in October 1964. She is noteworthy for having served as Auburn's mascot for the next 16 years. Shortly after War Eagle IV's death in 1981, the Birmingham Downtown Action Committee helped obtain War Eagle V from Wyoming. War Eagle V was very active in the Auburn Community and even attended national events such as the 1985 Boy Scouts of America National Jamboree. Every War Eagle since 1960 has been under the care of the brothers of Alpha Phi Omega and has been nicknamed "Tiger."

Unfortunately, War Eagle V died of a ruptured spleen in 1986. A new search by the Auburn University Alumni Association helped locate a new golden eagle at the Tennessee Valley Authority Raptor Rehabilitation Facility in Land Between the Lakes, Kentucky. This Eagle originally came from St. Louis, Missouri, where she was seized by federal agents and brought to Kentucky. Evidently, she was the victim

(continued on page 10)



of an illegal breeding program and had "imprinted" on humans. This gave her an unnatural affinity for people that made it impossible to release her to a wild she had never experienced. Like War Eagle V, she is under the stewardship of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and is on loan to the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine through its Southeastern Raptor Rehabilitation Center. She was approximately six years old when she arrived in the fall of 1986.

Since War Eagle VI was brought to Auburn, she has resided in a 5,400+ square foot (ground area) aviary. This facility is second in size only to the aviary that was recently constructed at the San Diego Zoo. The brothers of Alpha Phi Omega are largely responsible for its construction and maintenance. However, the War Eagle facility has limitations that need to be remedied as soon as possible.

The War Eagle needs a shelter that is easily accessible when seriously inclement weather is imminent. Prior to last spring, the extremely mild weather in Auburn did



not require sheltering of "Tiger" from the elements, and the necessity of an indoor facility was not critical. During April 1992, however, War Eagle VI developed a case of "bumblefoot." This disease primarily affects captive raptors due to the increased pressure on a single point on its foot. A colony of *Staphylococcus* bacteria will grow between the scales of a raptor's feet, causing a lesion to form. The infection can then spread inward and can be lethal if the bacterial cells reach the blood stream. To treat the infection, Dr. James L. Milton, Professor of Small Animal Surgery and Medicine, (and retainer of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Eagle Loan Agreement) performed a relatively minor surgery to remove the infected tissue. Unfortunately, the recovery period required "Tiger" to reside inside where her feet could be regularly wrapped and coated with antibiotic gels to prevent further infection. It was during this time that it became glaringly apparent that the appropriate facilities for keeping "Tiger" shel-

tered were not readily available.

Until this episode, "Tiger" was "unofficially" housed in the Alpha Phi Omega Book Exchange (BX) or the home of an Eagle Trainer during seriously inclement weather. Neither of these arrangements is acceptable for extended periods (not to mention being difficult to obtain on short notice). The Southeastern Raptor Rehabilitation Clinic at the Veterinary School is not an option since it is already over-crowded with sick and injured birds. Also, an impending move of the BX would take away the 24 hour access to equipment and food. This would make it especially difficult to care for the eagle during breaks when Foy Union cuts back its hours. The only viable solution to both of these problems is to build a facility in which the eagle trainers could house the training equipment and "Tiger" at any time. The bumblefoot incident did have a positive side-effect in that it helped make University officials aware that the mascot does not have a place of her own. They have offered their aid





in getting a facility built which will house the Eagle during rough weather as well as providing a place where the Eagle Trainers can have 24 hour access to the bird's food and handling equipment.

The new building was designed for Alpha Phi Omega by a local architect, Randy Wilson, who is also an advisor to the War Eagle Program. The "working" construction plans were completed by Oscar B. Waldheim, a Birmingham-based architect. The building itself will be approximately 320 square feet with three main rooms. The entrance room will house eagle gear and provisions, while the second room will be completely enclosed and provide an entrance to the aviary from the west

side. The second room will be designed to protect "Tiger" during extreme weather conditions. The third room will provide "Tiger" with

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***This is a project  
that will not only  
protect the War  
Eagle from the  
elements ...***

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the minimal shelter that is necessary in milder weather (like earlier this spring).

The final hurdle is simply raising enough money to get the shelter

built. The new building will cost between \$28,000 - \$30,000. Already several student organizations and the University have donated money to the project. The Student Government Association raised \$2,000 for the new aviary through its annual "Jail-n-Bail." The University Program Council, the Foy Union Board, and Eagle Budweiser Distributors have each donated \$1,000.

This is a project that will not only protect the War Eagle from the elements, but also proudly serve as a monument to the Auburn spirit.

Any parties interested in helping with this facility should contact an Eagle Trainer at the Alpha Phi Omega Book Exchange on Foy Patio, or call 844-4978. \*





# The Phenomenon of Country Music

by Meg Conger

What happens when you play a country song backward? Your wife comes back, your dog comes back, you get your truck back... A few years ago, country music was considered to be predictably written about personal problems such as these. The category also was not seriously thought of as a popular type of music. However, now, the classification has begun modernizing and becoming more popular. The popularity of the songs as well as the impact of the songs on society has increased.

Country and western music and dancing has become more and more mainstream in the past few years. It had drawn a more diversified audience, attracting baby boomers as well as college students. Baby boomers, who grew up listening to rock, are finding themselves attending concerts and buying CDs from the country sections of music stores. Auburn students, as well as their parents, sing along with and dance to songs played by growing country music radio stations such as South 106. Listeners, no matter what age, appreciate the "real people's music" because of its similarity to themselves (Painton 62). They can see parts of themselves, their personalities, their actions or their attitudes in the music.

"Country music listeners are more likely to have a household income of over \$40,000, be college-educated, and live in a metropolitan area than listeners of any other format, according to the

1991 Simmons Study of Media and Markets" (Goerne 1). Country music is not generalized to the lower classes anymore; more and more of all classes, especially the middle class, are starting to tune into country.

Even advertisers and publications have picked up on the popularity of

*Country America* magazine (Goerne). Country artists also advertise their albums in popular music magazines; K. D. Lang is one advertiser in *Rolling Stone*.

"Country appeals to the 'back to the basics' movement, getting back to home, community, family relationships—what's meaningful in life," said Jane Fitzgibbon, senior vice president/group director for consumer trends and insights for advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather (Goerne). Country is "relatable, natural and simplistic. You can understand the words," said Cheri Atkins, 02 INE, who just started listening to country music in the past two years.

"Country music has more feeling," said Alice Robertson, 01 PM, about why she thinks country music is becoming more popular. Another reason fans of country music give is that popular music today is more forcefully political, while country is more laid back. "It's not just a lot of people whining about their problems," said Colby Damron, 03 RSS.

"Younger stars, country music videos, a focus on traditional values and some aggressive marketing

are just a few of the factors that have enabled a hipper country to move in on consumers..." (Goerne).

Country music owes a lot of its present popularity to the new generation of singers that have come out of Nashville since the early to mid 1980s (Leland 64). "Country has had a lot of



Clint Black

country music and its celebrities. For example, several years ago, Coca-Cola hired country star Randy Travis to star in a television commercial (Goerne 1). Other large name businesses like Sony and Proctor and Gamble have recognized the strength of the target market and have advertised their products in



new good artists in the last three years, and it has just taken off from there," said Patti Iler, 03 FCD. These new singers are also mixing popular characteristics into their medium. Billy Ray Cyrus became famous with his song "Achy Breaky Heart." Mary-Chapin Carpenter and k. d. lang have moved away from the traditional "twangy" type of songs and are considered more a part of the popular category. Carpenter's song "Passionate Kisses" has been heard on various types of radio stations, including top 40, country and mainstream stations.

Another reason why country music has become popular is that the public has started to like artists who look like themselves. Popular singer Vince Gill keeps physically fit by playing golf (Painton 62). Many of the current artists are college-educated. For example, Garth Brooks studied advertising at Oklahoma State University, and Mary-Chapin Carpenter has a degree in American civilizations from Brown University (Painton).

Country music is beginning to have a stronger impact on society. Country music themes and subject matter are an indication of how people's values and attitudes are changing, as well as having a strong impact on society.

Country and western music has begun to deal with more topics than just the traditional relationships and family. Songwriters have moved away from the "There's a tear in my beer" type song that Hank Williams Jr. sang and now are dealing with more topical, current issues. For example, Garth Brooks has tackled several controversial issues in some of his latest songs. In "We shall be free," from his album *The Chase*, Brooks sings, "The world's big enough for all different views," meaning that people should be more accepting of those with different attitudes and opinions (Altman 24). This song is also a plea for tolerance and acceptance of homosexuals. Another of his songs, "Face to face," deals with a date rape victim meeting her rapist at the trial (Altman). "Thunder rolls" is also controversial in that the

video was banned by several companies because of its violent portrayal of spousal abuse. Singers like Brooks have not been afraid to talk about such real, existing problems in society.

Singers have also acknowledged that their audience has changed to be a larger segment of all different classes; they have begun discussing wine and restaurants instead of beer and bars.

Society's sex roles have also been changing, as shown by several country songs. A decade ago, Tammy Wynette announced her independence from women's stereotypical roles in the 1982's "Another Chance" (Stark 68). Other artists have also obviously rebelled against traditional sex roles. Loretta Lynn's "Happy Birthday" tells of a woman leaving her cheating husband (Stark). Lynn also encourages women to stand up for themselves and to think in her song "The pill." This song gives the public a "no more babies" message (Stark). "(I'm gonna) Put you back on the rack," by Dottie West, encourages women to stand up to their men (Stark).

Male country singers have also showed society's changing attitudes toward women. These artists have apologized for their sex's past behavior and have shown a genuine concern for the emotional aspects of the relationship between men and women (Stark). Attitudes in the songs show less glorification of womanizing and adulterous behavior. David Houston's "A woman always knows" and Miss Emily's picture" by John Conlee show the changing attitudes of men toward women (Stark).

The effect of country music on listeners has been studied and has produced some surprising results. Auburn Associate Professor of Sociology Jim Gundlach and Steven Stack of Wayne State University have studied the effect of country music on suicide rates.

In their study, Gundlach and Stack hypothesized, "the themes found in country music foster a suicidal mood among people already at risk of suicide and that it is thereby associated with a

high suicide rate" (211). One of these ideas found in country songs is the problems in the relationships between men and women. Divorce and heartache are often subjects of music of the "country subculture."

Alcohol and alcoholism are also themes of country songs; Gundlach and Stack found that exposure to the type of music is linked to higher rates of drinking among listeners (212). Alcoholism, in turn, can lead to an increased suicide rate through alcoholism.

Also a theme found in country music that increases the risk of suicide is financial distress (Stack and Gundlach 212). Problems at work and monetary troubles can lead to a feeling of hopelessness and depression among listen-



**Wynonna Judd**

ers, therefore increasing the risk of suicide (212).

Country music, according to Gundlach and Stack, has a subculture. The subculture members are similar in type of dress, musical preferences and station of life. These members are predominantly white but are changing in their economic classes and their places of residence (212). More and more of the members are outside the lower class and the southern geographic region.

"While country music per se probably will not drive people to suicide, given its link to a subculture and its appeal to persons within the subculture who are already at increased risk of

(Continued on page 14)



suicide, it can impact on suicide rates" Stack and Gundlach 213).

Despite the increased risk of suicide, country music's popularity is booming for many reasons. Each listener has different aspects of the type of music that appeals to them. The music has drawn a lot of attention in the United States in the past few years and has made a strong name for itself among listeners and non-listeners. Country

music has changed, and songs are no longer about losing wives, dogs, and trucks.

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# Auburn goes Country

by Meg Cogner

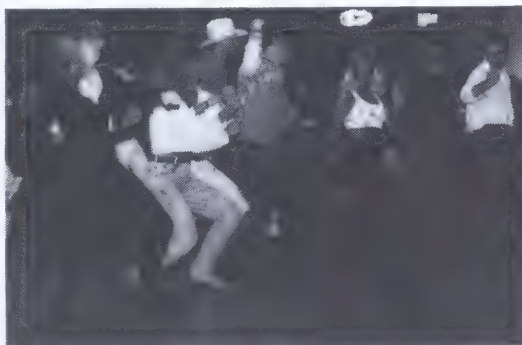


The popularity of country music among students has been growing, as shown by the strength of the country bars and dance spots in and near Auburn. C.M. Ride and The Rodeo Club in Dadeville, open to 21-year-olds and older, are popular all-country dance places. C.M. Ride, which opened this past winter, has structured dance lessons as well as practice rooms separate from the regular dance floor. The Rodeo Club, 45 minutes away, offers a large dance floor and pool tables. Other clubs in Auburn, such as The Supper Club and The Crazy Horse Cafe, offer occasional or frequent country music bands, and the Ultrabox offers a weekly country music night.

The University Program Council (UPC) also stepped into the country music scene by offering a series of weekly "two-step" classes winter quarter. The well-attended classes,

led by an instructor from The Rodeo Club, were followed by a dance in the Foy Union ballroom.

Because of the popularity of country music on Auburn's campus and in



Photograph by Jason Smith

the local area, UPC was able to organize a spring concert with Clint Black and Wynonna, formerly of the Judds. Auburn students, faculty and staff showed their enthusiasm by buying out all of the 2,000 block seats in approximately an hour and a half. Students camped out as early as 1 p.m. Sunday for the regular student seats, which went on sale Mon-

day, April 4, at 10 a.m. By Sunday afternoon, people had begun setting up tents outside the coliseum to stay dry from the rain and pulling up couches and chairs inside Foy Union to relax and wait for tickets to go on sale. "I'm here because I saw him two years ago at the Omni in Atlanta, but I was so far away. I knew here I could get better seats," said Mariah Coffel, 02, a longtime fan.

The popularity of country dances also shows the widespread interest in country music. The "achy breaky," the "tush push" and the "two step" are popular country and western dances offered in clubs. Line dances, such as the "tush push," are popular because dancers do not need a partner. Texas dances, according to C.M. Ride, are "rooster dances" because the man can show his partner off. Popular couples dances are the "two step" and the "single time swing." \*



*Poems by*

## **Bridgette Kohnhurst**

### **Dance Is**

Tension stretched like a rubber band  
that could snap,  
but does not.

A rolling ball of fire, it glides  
along hip and waist.  
Sometimes the fire counts  
the ridges of ribs to underneath the arm,  
so, the elbow lifts wrist then fingertip.

On a gold thread from before floorboards,  
it runs through feet, up the soft back of knees  
rides on the tailbone  
leaves the top of your head floating  
in breath exhaled a thousand times.

### **Monday Morning**

Plastic covers the window  
And tries to keep the heat in  
For damp clothes that still hand  
While Dylan moans.  
Another unlaundered pile waits to go.  
Dried pesto cream sauce flakes  
On the pan in the sink.  
Algae lingers in the fish tank.  
Grandpa died this September and willed me  
A solid fifty-cent piece. It seems anonymous  
With all the coins in the jar.  
The pen dry of fiction  
But outside a dead leaf can whirl  
Across a parking lot towards the East  
And obscure gray anonymity.

### **Swimming Laps**

From a distance as I approach  
their arms stroke from the surface  
making small arcs, like the turn of boards  
nailed in a paddlewheel.  
They come and go for all the onlookers  
who hope they will not see the push  
of a ferry stop in mid-motion,  
at least in daylight.

By sundown my gazing stops and must be  
swallowed hard from within  
the pool. Feet push off aflutter,  
reluctant in the back and forth  
that always reaches for motion.  
And with every breath  
there is a glimpse of the sky,  
sometimes a gray wash, or maybe pure blue.



*What follows is a light-hearted poem, written by an anonymous witness to the events of the last few years at Auburn. This manuscript was slipped under the door of the Circle after hours, and all we saw of the author was a shadowy figure skulking away into the night. Since we have no desire for the Circle to become known as a magazine given to sleazy submission practices, we are printing the poem so that the author may be captured and beaten. Due to the questionable nature of the author, we suspect the person to be a faculty member.*

-the editors

## Academic Atmosphere

At last the football tumult died away;  
Graver practices of knowledge then held sway.  
But combating mortals ceased not to wage  
Their contests of wills upon like's stage.

The land grant shouts grew Boldly Lowder,  
By Senate and Solomon wisely countered  
That citizens need culture to be prouder,  
To make more of life than crowing louder.  
Urgings of a debate were heard,  
But, thus far, truth is only a word  
That does not invade the hall of Trustees  
Where is heard Ramsey, gays, and fees.

Ramsey, lawyers, and one hour flew by  
All failing in their attempt to Dye,  
To stain the beauty of the Plain,  
The memories of glories past, by rain  
To be washed away with ease  
Like paper on Toomer's Corner's trees.  
A strident female voice squeaked as a mouse  
Who disturbs the peacefulness of the House:  
"Not Composmentis Auburn Academus"  
Rang the shouts that grew to a paper fuss,  
Fueled by Capital advertisers  
Others said by pachyderm advisors.  
Grave judicial heads then advise  
Upon the weight, the measure, the size,  
Of this important issue; then all see  
We need not fear the Death Penalty:  
"We'll absorb a loss from the Student Ac Feel!"  
Meanwhile Ramsey struts his time on the stage

Accompanied by guards, wife's finger, and rage.  
Other fingers point to obligations  
Ignored by both sides in the conflagration.  
The while, true pursuits burn in the flames  
Of Ramsey, gays, and fees that lick the plains.

A stronger Muse is found from colder climes  
To bring the Plains some happier times.  
But the Barnes door has been left ajar  
And the SGA gaily goes too far:  
HUNTING a solution, a Waggonner,  
Hauling a Safeton, attempts to steer  
A course to barely break even a Burk's heart,  
With help by a "Nay" from a McCart.  
"No meeting place; no student ac fees"  
The SGA gravely, gaily decrees  
To Gay and Lesbian Associates  
Who had met all prerequisites.  
Certainly such fees are in the realm  
Of the SGA as it fingers the helm

Of the student life; but to determine the use  
Of university space is too loose  
An application of democracy,  
As controlled by school bureaucracy.  
The STUDENTS crashed and burned in this AFFAIR  
As that office twiddled thumbs, stared into the air.  
A representative tried to TURN HAM  
Into a silk law if he can:  
"By law no public fund or facility  
May be used for sex or sodomy."  
"A letter," the bureaucrats decree,  
"Will stop talk of sex or sodomy."  
But from Architecture to English ensues  
Wisdom for a change; the form is refused.  
Wise heads refuse to sign the form,  
Hope by this means to calm the storm,  
To restore some common, nay human sense  
To the increasing contentiousness.

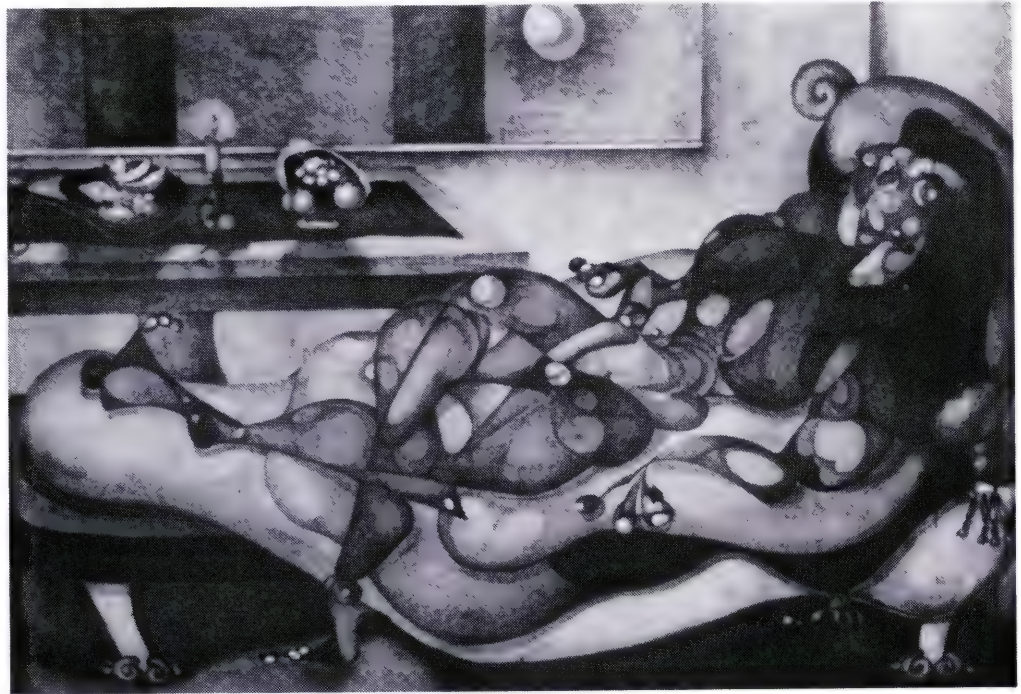
Alas, common sense is little prized  
By those who value only the size  
Of contributions made by alumnis,  
Of crowds on football SaturDYES.  
Success breeds success, but failure brews  
Discontent; such storms distill into stews  
Whose brackish broths only further confuse.  
Lost in the hub bub, which is all consuming,  
Is the student, the teacher, the human.  
Assessing the human spirit; trying to make the call,  
We contend the flask half-empty; nay half-full.  
Lost amidst the struggle for what is right,  
Amidst the trivial, is the human light.



# Student Art Exhibit

*from the Department of Art's Annual Juried Student Fine Arts Exhibition*

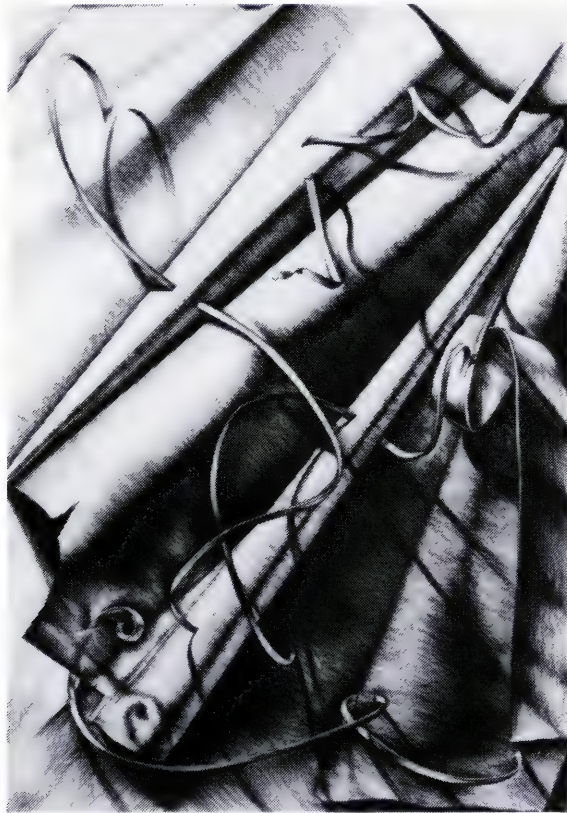
*Reclining Woman*  
lithograph  
by Adam Perschall



*Jennifer*  
silverpoint  
Emily Brown







*Simpson's Thoughts on Revelation*  
charcoal  
Mohammad Dolabadi



*Self Portrait*  
relief print  
Patrick S. Cassady



# INNOVATION

## Student Convocations

by John Mouton

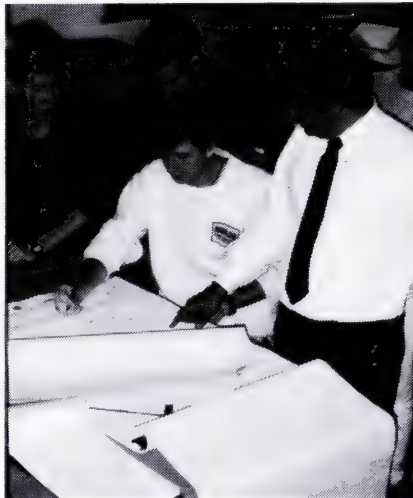
*It often takes a change in leadership to find solutions for simple problems. The Building Science department in the School of Architecture, under the guidance of newly appointed Department Head John Mouton, has found a simple solution to an age old problem facing both students and faculty, the lack of effective communication.*

The department of Building Science holds a one hour convocation on the third day of every quarter. During this assembly, students and faculty meet to consider matters of interest to the department. Students need to know when and how; they want to know why. Regulation is easier for students to accept if the rationale is explained. Students will be responsible if we expect them to think and plan for themselves; our convocation provides a unique opportunity to accomplish this objective.

Convocation is an open discussion of the policies and programs of the department. It is a time that benefits both students and faculty. In a general sense, the topics of the convocations include the students, faculty, the calendar of events, changes, and policies and procedures.

The quarterly meeting is beneficial to the students in that it allows

all of the students in Building Science to meet at one time and discuss topics that concern every one of them. Convocation not only recognizes those outstanding students, it provides information and insight to the students regarding departmental activities, policies, procedures, and development. Then the students are



given the opportunity to review and discuss a broad range of topics and issues that face them in the department. The students are encouraged to freely speak their mind, raising their concerns about class size and scheduling. The administration learns from the students' critique and can respond to the benefit of our students and to the betterment of the department.

Not only are the achievements of

the students recognized, but those of the faculty are as well. Without convocation the students would know only the faculty members that they had met through classes and only in a classroom setting individually. Convocation is an opportunity for students to see the faculty as a whole, working together within the department to reach the goals of the department. Through the convocation, the students can develop a perception of, and respect for, the faculty as a working unit, perhaps before individually experiencing them in the classroom. This type of interaction will enhance the students' performance and improve their opportunity to learn.

Since convocation is a time when everyone within the department can meet together, it is an excellent opportunity to set a calendar of events. There is benefit to all in advance notice with lead time to resolve problems. As an example, limited Summer Quarter course offerings for 1993 impacted the graduation plans of some students. This matter was identified at Spring Convocation and the students had an appropriate time frame to resolve their concerns and solve their problems. Had there not been this communication between the department and students, those students would have been forced to



move their expected date of graduation back a quarter.

Changes within the department is another common topic for the quarterly assembly. While change usually brings progress, change is also often problematic for those who are not informed. Convocation communicates change effectively and efficiently to the benefit of the students and the department.

An interactive convocation addresses current and evolving matters of curriculum, student responsibility regarding academic progress

and procedure, rules regarding facilities and equipment, and similar functional/logistical topics assuring understanding, improving continuity, and reducing the number and types of student problems.

Convocation is not intended to solve problems; we operate in a complex environment. We are continually challenged by educated, intellectual, and inquiring people that have collective and individual interests. When we can deal with broad matters through convocation, individual time with students can be

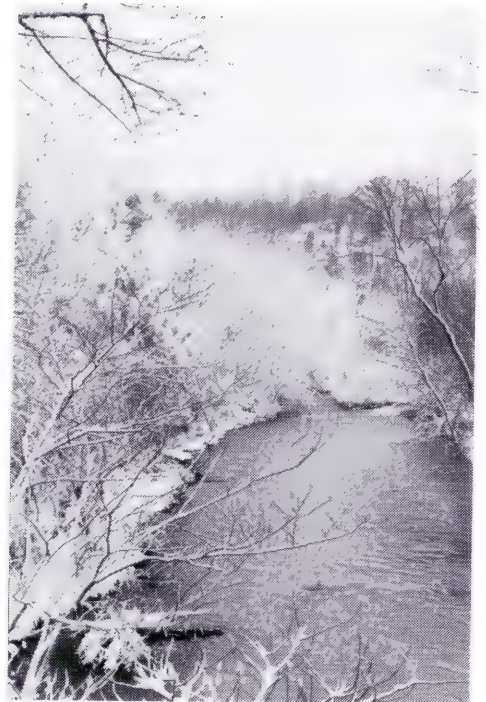
dedicated to their specific interests and problems.

Academicians often observe that students and alumni have pride in university athletics and seldom in academics. An important part of the student experience is to be part of a larger experience. Both participatory and spectator athletics provide this sense. Students have many competing interests, and convocation provides a unique opportunity for the student to engage their academic unit and to become an active participant in their department. \*



***Chewacla State Park  
after the Blizzard of '93***

*Photographs by  
Jason Sanford*





# God's Finger Touched Her

## *and She Fell Asleep*

by Dina Smith

Most of the graves faced the morning sun, but there wasn't any particular order to the cemetery. I liked it that way. It was a big cemetery, considering how small Daddy's church was. It had been there a long time, since the early part of the nineteenth century, and over a hundred years of history was written in the headstones. There weren't many places to bury the dead in our county, although there was a slick, new cemetery built in town when I was ten. It had over a thousand identical, glossy headstones with the same plastic lilies lined up in perfect rows alongside them.

In our cemetery, almost no two graves were alike. There were groups of family graves in clusters, sometimes four generations together. Some were closed in with ancient wrought-iron fences, and others had an oak or magnolia tree to shade them. Crepe myrtles, azaleas, wild roses, and daffodils grew around the plots, and people only put fake flowers on the graves in the winter. A few old ladies tended their families' graves like gardens, stopping by on Sunday mornings before church to water flowers or pull up weeds.

Mrs. Bennett was too old to keep a garden of flowers around her daughter's grave. Liza Bennett had

died forty years earlier, and Mrs. Bennett came every Sunday morning to put red carnations on her grave. Her eyesight wasn't good, and mornings were the only time she could read what was written on the headstone: "God's Finger Touched Her



Photograph by Ashley Wright

and She Slept." Mrs. Bennett would sit on the low wall underneath the elm tree, shaded from the sun, and fan herself. Mornings were cool enough for her to be able to sit for a while outside until the sun rose higher and more people crowded into the church.

Behind Liza Bennett's grave was an opening in the woods, a discreet path which led to the black

section of the cemetery. It was mostly hidden from view, and we weren't allowed to play back there.

Nailed to various trees back there were pieces of old sheet metal that had names crudely painted on them: "Mr. Clarence and Rosie A. Jones' lot." There were also homemade graves; some were cement, hand-lettered with sayings like "Gone But Not Forgotten." Others had brick borders and a blank sheet of metal propped up against a pine tree with a rock. We never saw people back there, not in the morning before church.

On Wednesday, before choir practice, some of us would play freeze tag or British Bulldog in the big open area over the mass grave of Confederate soldiers. There were good trees to climb, and enough cover for games of capture the flag. During hide and seek, I liked to climb up on the big statue of the Virgin Mary on the Higgins' family plot. I would quietly move around her to always stay on the other side of whoever was "It," and no one thought to look for me there. The inscription on the headstone under Mary said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

It was quiet there at night, unlike the noisy parsonage when Daddy got worked up practicing his ser-



mons. The cemetery at night was just me and sleeping souls. That's what the headstones said: "Asleep in Jesus," "The Weary are at Rest," "Mother Sleepeth." I would lie between the small graves of children who had been sleeping for seventy years and look up at the monument



*Photograph by Brandon Wright*

***... I could know  
what it felt like to  
be nothing.***

of their guardian angel.

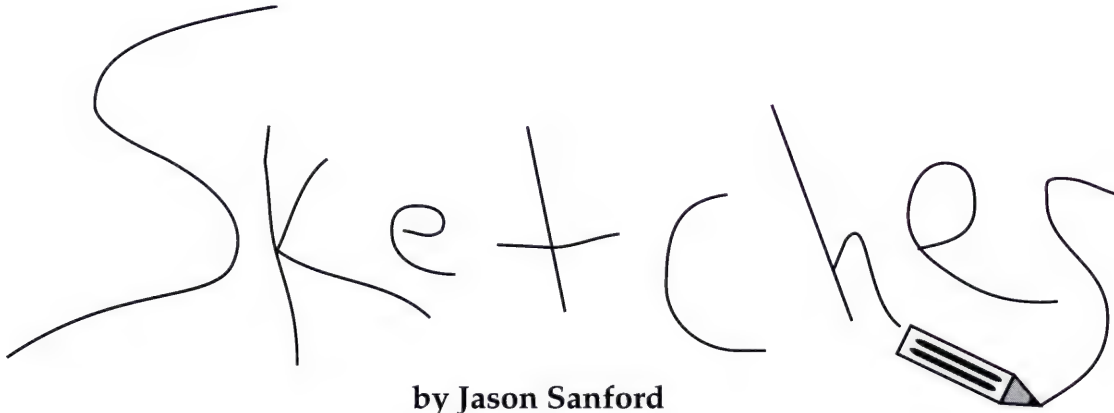
She was beautiful when there was a full moon, the light outlining her wings and flowing dress—which looked like it was moving with the breeze even though it was carved of stone. She had one arm raised, but her fist was closed so I couldn't see what she was holding.

I liked to wonder what was in her hand, and then I'd try not to think of anything, so I could know what it felt like to be nothing. But it didn't take long before I was listening to the night, which wasn't so quiet after all. The air was alive with the songs of crickets and locusts. The fireflies blinked around the monuments, sometimes blending with the stars as the insect noise became part of the sound of my breathing, and I was carried into sleep by the sound of the angel's wings. ✱



*Miss Bickerstaff 1972*  
Roger A. Pritchett





by Jason Sanford

It's just an old desk top that I snagged from the room of donated supplies. I have it under the oak tree in front of the mission house, and I sketch there every afternoon before the rains come in. What I've been trying to capture are the contrasts of Honduras. Like the mountains surrounding me; tall, but not so high that the trees and grass can't reach their peaks. Their damp green slopes end in a line near level ground, where the tile and thatch huts begin. That's what I see, and I'm sketching what I can, careful not to poke my pencil through the screw holes in the desk top.

At least, I would be sketching what I could, but not now. For the moment, my subject is a photo, there to the side of my easel. It's a dead man surrounded by flowers and laid out in his best shirt. His name was Diez, and if you don't look closely you won't see the machete wound in his chest. I'm doing his portrait.

Or I'm supposed to be doing his portrait. What I'm doing instead is listening to the argument from the front of the mission house. Martin is there, arguing with Miguel Marmol, the man who murdered Diez.

Martin Johnson is the man in charge of the mission. Thirty or more years ago, he turned the ranch into a church mission. There is an orphanage here, a small school, some medical care, and, of course, the church services. Martin runs the place himself, and every summer he comes to churches in Alabama

to ask for volunteers. Come help, he says, labor for the Lord. So we're here, six high school students in all. Today is Saturday, and it is the end of our third week in Honduras.

The reason Martin brought me here was to take pictures and paint, supposedly for some inspirational book he is writing about his experiences here. I take pictures of the day-to-day things, like students working on the orphanage or shots of the landscape in general. But anything special, anything somewhat

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***The reason Martin brought me here was to take pictures and paint, supposedly for some inspirational book he is writing ...***

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spiritual, I'm supposed to do a drawing of. So you can highlight the positive and negative aspects of things, Martin said. Last night, Martin gave a lesson to us about the evils of sin, and used Miguel and Diez as contrasting examples. Now he wants me to draw Diez, with certain 'highlights.'

The argument between Martin and Miguel keeps going on, but whatever it

is about, it eventually ends. Miguel goes out the mission door, gets on his horse and rides away with a polite wave to me. I'm watching him go, and noting things. Like his stance, his build and character, his face. Things I'll try to get on paper when I draw him.

Martin is on the porch now, also watching Miguel. The dirt road is very dry, and it is strange watching the heat wrinkles distort Miguel while I'm cool under my tree. When he is out of sight behind a grove of scraggly trees, Martin comes over. To speak, and look at my progress.

"How is it coming, Hetch?" he asks.

"Not well." Martin takes my latest try, then hands it back. The sketch shows a Diez looking extremely unholy. Assuming that looking dead is not holy.

"I don't understand," Martin says. "I've seen your other sketches, and know you can do better. What's the problem?"

He is waiting for an answer, and I have one to give. Or, I feel like I have one to give. But how do you say it is hard to make someone look like more than they are.

"Must be the photo," I say instead. "It's really not so clear."

Martin almost nods, then bends over and lifts the photo. It's an impressive sight, Martin moving about, because he is so big. It's not fat either, even though Martin is over fifty and could get away with it if he chose. No, Martin is just big, six foot two with muscles. The kind

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY JASON SANFORD

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of body I want. Not when I grow up, but now, before school starts up again at summer's end.

"Lad, you might have something there." Martin says after looking at the photo. "The lighting wasn't that good when I took it, even with those candles. Tell you what, Hetch. You follow me to the funeral today. I've got to say a few words, so bring a camera and get another photo."

I'm bobbing my head, great idea, while Martin tells me to get my backpack and be ready to leave. The whole time, I'm thinking of this photo. It's got this guy I barely knew, way dead now, and I can't draw him like Martin wants me to. The new photo won't help, but there I am an hour later, tagging along as Martin leaves the ranch.

Here's the problem. I'm with Martin, we're walking along, our destination an hour away in the heat. We walk side by side, and the walking is not the problem. The problem is the silence. It's the kind of silence that begs for conversation—in fact, demands it. But what can Martin and I talk about?

The walk is nothing like the one I had with Miguel two weeks ago. Even though he spoke little English, and I even less Spanish, we communicated great. We enjoyed gesturing, trying to do small talk and laughing at our inability to get much across.

But Martin? Even though we can completely understand each other, even down to the same accent because he is originally from Mississippi, words just don't flow between us. Like now, for example. Here we are, talking on about different things, all polite like. But the words are all out of place, like they belong somewhere else.

The only thing I want to talk to Martin about is Diez and Miguel, to find out more about what happened. I only met Diez twice, at Sunday church services. He seemed nice, but I had a feeling he was trying too hard to be seen as nice. Now he is dead.

And Miguel, I like him. He never came to church, but he showed me

around the valley when I got lost. Now he is a murderer, and I don't know why he did it.

"What exactly happened between Miguel and Diez?" I ask.

Martin doesn't slow down his pace, but talks as we walk.

"Miguel had too much to drink the other night, at the bar up ahead. Evidently he and Diez were arguing about something earlier that night. Miguel left the bar to go home, and a few



minutes later everyone heard a scream. They found Diez, dying, with Miguel saying it was self-defense."

"Was it?" I ask.

"Of course not," Martin replies. "Diez was a good man, and I've never known him to ever raise his fist in anger."

"In fact," he adds, "I am thinking of adding this event to my book as an example of what sin can cause people to do. That's why I need you to do Diez's portrait." He then gives me the verse, something relevant from Romans that I ignore.

Amen when he finishes, and I let the conversation drop back to polite talk.

Honduras is strange. It is so different from Alabama, yet has this strange feeling of home. There are huts scattered all along the dirt road, people living wherever they can. The ranch, and all the land around it, are in this large valley. In the mountains surrounding the valley, there are forests, waterfalls, everything untouched by

anyone. We go up there to swim, and it's beautiful, what with the lush growth and the smell of water. But come down the slopes to usable land and the trees stop. It reminds me some of Alabama, of those places back home that were clear cut ten years ago. They are some small trees with sick pale leaves, lots of bushes, but the land hasn't had time to recover. That is what Honduras feels like, down where people live.

But the weird thing is that this is only the impression the land gives. There are still some large trees standing in the valley. But with the cows, the people and their huts, all the poverty everywhere, the land feels desolate, until the rains come in the afternoon, and the valley is cast with clouds. The rains give the valley back its beauty, in addition to water and cooler air.

But now it is hot and dusty. After thirty minutes of walking Martin motions to stop under a tree. We sit down on clumps of clay to drink our water. The water here is nasty, and everyday I pull a lemon off the lemon tree at the mission to put in my canteen. Not enough to make lemonade, but enough to mask the taste of the water. We drink, then rest, and I feel that Martin is about to say something. I race him to it, to push him towards talking about the argument.

"How long have you been in Honduras?" I ask.

"Over thirty years, most of them in this area and in the ranch house."

"Thirty years? All of that in Honduras?"

"Well," he admits, "I've gone back to the States a few times, and my wife and I left for a few months during the Soccer War. What? Oh, it was a small little war, fought right here along the border with El Salvador. Started because of a soccer game, the World Cup, I think, between the two countries. Lasted only a week, but several thousand died and we left for a while."

I quickly swallow the water in my mouth.

"Does stuff like that, or the Diez murder, happen here all the time?" I

(Continued on page 26)



ask. "You know, people getting killed without reason?"

"No," Martin says. Then he hesitates but no verses come out this time. "No more than anywhere else."

I never do steer the conversation to the argument, or the murder. A few minutes after we begin walking again, we pass the bar where Miguel had been drinking before he killed Diez. It is a small place, an open-air bar made of a thatched roof over some counters and coolers. A truck brings fresh ice and drinks over the mountains three times a week.

The bartender waves to us as we pass by, and we wave back. If I had brought any money, I could stop and get some cokes. But as it is, we keep going. It is probably a good thing anyway, because Miguel is at the bar.

He had passed us earlier, coming up from behind on his horse. He and I had exchanged greetings, but Martin seemed to try not to notice him. This seemed to bother Miguel, but he shrugged, then kept on going. Once past us, I noticed that Miguel had a pistol strapped to his belt, something I had never seen him wear before.

I wonder if he still drinks there at night, when other people are around. Do people stare, even talk to him? The Miguel who killed a man, and is free to live his life. Do people think he was justified, that it was self-defense? Or will no one dare approach him about the death? But if either of those were true, why is he wearing a pistol now?

A little ways down the road, I decide to be more blunt.

"What were you and Miguel arguing about earlier?"

"Miguel is afraid," Martin says, "because the army is coming to get him for the killing. He is afraid they might just kill him without a trial, so he was asking for asylum within the mission."

"And you aren't going to give it to him, are you?"

Maybe I am too accusatory in my tone, but Martin doesn't answer. We just walk on.

We reach the village when the sun

is much lower. I don't have a watch, but give half an hour, and the rains will be starting. Another hour or so and they'll be stopping, afterward evening and time to eat. Then devotional, followed by sleep. No need for a watch in Honduras.

The road goes through the middle of the village. It's a small place, more a group of huts that just happen to stand together than a village. They are all thatch, one room dwellings with mud covering the walls. In some villages the mud is painted white, but not here. The only color in this village are the smeared reds of the clay on the walls and the variously colored clothes the villagers wear.

The village has no grass in it, just dried dirt, or mud, depending on the rains. There are hogs constantly rooting around in the dirt of the village. I don't mind hogs, the ranch has a pig that's even kind of cute. What I can't stand are the chickens. They go everywhere.



***"Miguel is afraid ... because the army is coming to get him ..."***

Inside the huts, outside, you can't help but have chickens. In the heat there is the smell of hot chicken. After the rains, the smell of wet chickens. The village isn't that bad, but the flocks of chickens makes it seem far dirtier than it is.

I'd draw the village without the chickens.

Everyone comes over to greet Martin, and they shake my hand as well. There are about forty people here, and they've been standing outside one hut but now they surround us. Martin speaks to them in Spanish, and I say the few words I know but can't understand the responses. No need, I'm an outsider here, and I'm trying to get off to one side of the funeral gathering when Martin grabs my arm.

"Come with me, Hetch," he says. "There is someone I want you to meet."

I do as he says, following behind Martin as he leads me into the hut everyone had been standing outside of. We go inside, and there is Diez, lying on a table. Wilted flowers surround him and there is a faint red color under the front of his shirt. I try not to look at him, focusing instead on Martin. Somebody has closed the hatch on the only window in the room, and in the heat the body stinks. I feel woozy as Martin takes me over to a woman sitting against the back wall.

"This is Maria, Diez's wife," he says.

I smile and nod, and Martin says something more in Spanish. I feel sick, wishing for a breeze to blow through the door. Maria says something, obviously to me, then a few more words to Martin. But I don't care; I just want to get out. Martin finishes up, then we leave.

Martin is also gasping deeply as we get outside, and I feel my nausea beginning to lessen. "I told her you were doing Diez's portrait," he says between breathes, "And she said thank you."

I try to give a response, but Martin gives me no time. "Wait here," he says, and goes walking off behind the hut.

So I stay put, turning around to look at the people. They aren't speaking much, some watching me and some watching the clouds building up over the mountains. It will be raining soon, which is good. I am under the porch and even there it is hot. Only the rain will cool everything off. I see the grave, off to one side of the village, and I wonder how long it took to dig in this heat.

There is a fluttering of wings be-



hind me, and I turn as Martin comes around the house, scattering the chickens. He is leading a boy about my age, smaller than I and definitely no more than sixteen. A boy, my age, but he looks like a man.

"Hetch, this is Che," Martin says as an introduction. We shake hands, and Martin introduces me to Che in Spanish.

"Che is Diez's son. He says to tell you he is honored that you are doing a portrait of his father."

I smile, nodding, and so Che nods back. Is there anything more to say? Martin doesn't think so, and he lets Che walk off.

"Che is almost the twin of his father," Martin says, as I wonder how well he knew Diez. He then walks toward the crowd of people and I follow. Everyone flows around Martin, and there is silence as he leads us over to the grave.

I pick a spot towards the rear of the funeral, still able to see because I am taller than anyone but Martin. There are people on both sides of the grave, and Martin is standing at the head over the wooden cross. He is holding his Bible, and a flower, and doesn't move when Diez is brought out.

Six men carry him out on a white sheet. They are somber, walking slowly and with emphasis. Maria is behind the body, looking younger now that she is outside. She is walking with Che, and they take their place at the foot of the grave.

It gets even more quiet, and I'm the only one looking around. Martin has the best clothes, his usual old slacks and white shirt. Others, the men, are wearing blue jeans, boots, and white shirts. The women have their dresses, some in black, others not. But everyone is clean, extremely so, and their heads are being held low. Everyone is sweating, and they only raise their heads when Martin begins speaking.

He uses his low, soft voice, almost as if he is humming out the words. I catch a word here, a phrase someplace else, but Martin speaks past anything I

can understand. Once he reads from the Bible, which is in English but his words come out Spanish. I also hear the name 'Diez' once, then again. And I also hear the name 'Miguel Marmol' spoken. When Martin says it, everyone begins to mumble, and someone says what I think is a cuss word. Martin gets very irate at this point, and whatever he says quiets everyone for the time being.

if we need another."

I agree, especially since the men are already burying Diez. They are having a hard time of it as the dirt turns to mud, but they keep going. I glance at the photo, which is already showing some shapes

"Should be good enough," I tell him. It won't be, I know it, but I keep quiet.



The rains are coming down the mountains by the time Martin finally stops. He lets there be silence for a minute, then he says two more words. I know them. "Adios, Diez." Then Martin lets the flower he is holding fall into the grave.

The people mill off, going to the huts and shelters as the rains come rushing in. A few men go for their shovels, but wait when Martin speaks to them.

"Come take the photo," Martin yells, and I go up to the grave. I brought my instant camera, which I use to take pictures to paint from. I get the shot just as the rain drops are exploding in puffs in the dust at our feet. Then we are running for cover, just making it to a porch as the clouds drop and everything goes grey with water. We sit down in two chairs made out of stretched tire rubber, and I put the picture in my lap to develop.

"Hope it turns out well," Martin says. "This rain isn't going to help Diez

The water is rolling off the thatch and landing around us. Because the porch floor is also the ground, the muddy water is flowing under our chairs and around our boots.

"This is why I love this country," he says. "The rain. No matter how bad it gets here, the rain fixes everything. It coats the place, colors everything so even the God-forsaken stuff looks blessed."

I bob my head, and I do agree. The air will be cool after the rain, and everything will have a sheen to it. The thatch gets a slight shimmer, as do the grasses and trees. Even the dirt is graced with clear, reflecting puddles, until you step in them and stir up the mud. I look down at the photo, which is through developing. It is even worse than the other one, but it is what I have to work with. I stick it in my pocket, and we wait out the rain.

It is sunset by the time we are leaving the village, and we plan on walking a little faster than before, to try

(Continued on page 28)



and get home before dark. The sun is just dipping below the mountains that surround the valley, and their shadows race towards us. Because it is hard to see, I'm looking straight ahead and almost miss the horse and rider coming toward us. It is Miguel Marmol, and he silently passes us. Martin yells something, but Miguel ignores him. We watch him go for a moment, then Martin yells, "Come on, Hetch," then sets off running. Back toward the village.

"What's going on?" I ask, getting the words out while I gasp for breathe, and struggle to keep up with Martin.

Martin has to hear me, because I'm right next to him. But he just keeps on going without answering, and I have to ask again before he answers me.

"The villagers are still mad at Miguel," he says. "This is not a good time for him to go through there."

We keep running and as we near



the village we can already hear shouts from up ahead. I'm not far behind Martin when he rounds the first hut and stops. He's barely breathing when I come up to him, while I'm breathing heavy and can barely focus on anything. Martin is staring at someone in the center of the village. I rest against the hut, and gaze where Martin is looking.

"What is going on?" I say.

I can see some of what is up. The villagers have formed a circle around Miguel, who looks like he has been dragged from his horse. He is somewhat drunk, and is stumbling around while Che stalks after him, screaming. Even though Miguel is larger than Che, Miguel is the one backing away. He is

trying to calm Che down, saying something even as he backs away.

"Miguel is trying to explain that it was self-defense," Martin says, not looking away. "He says Diez attacked him after leaving the bar, that he had no choice but to kill him."

I look around at the villagers. A few of them are shaking their heads, as if they don't believe Miguel.

When Martin moves closer, I follow. Miguel is still backing away from Che, still talking. They are near Diez's grave now. The ring of people is swelling and flowing around the two, but no one seems willing to intervene. They are just waiting. And the more Miguel says, the more furious Che becomes.

As Miguel backs closer to the grave, someone begins to shout a warning. With a sudden lunge, Che goes for Miguel, who jumps backward to avoid him and falls back as his leg sinks into

***We keep running  
and as we near  
the village we can  
already hear  
shouts from up  
ahead.***

the fresh mud of the grave. As he hits the ground, his pistol falls out of his holster into the mud. For a moment, everyone is transfixed by the weapon. Then Che leaps for the gun.

I'm seeing it all, as Martin jumps toward Che.

There is Che, so much his father's son. He is grabbing the pistol, raising it up. He is going to kill Miguel. Everyone knows it, I know it, and only Martin is moving.

And there is Miguel, drunk, not moving fast enough as a result and knowing that he is dead. There is nothing that he can do. And Martin is still moving.

I am watching all of this, and it is hitting me that this is real. This is real,

I am seeing it happen, and I couldn't begin to draw all the complexity here.

The shot wakes me up. It goes off, and the bullet hits the ground as Martin knocks the pistol from Che's hand. Several other men then react, holding Che down. Someone even helps Miguel up. Then it is done. And I'm standing around doing nothing.

I'm not sure what happens during the next hour, because Martin is too busy to translate for me. He talks to both Che and Miguel, going on long and hard with them both. Finally, Che goes off to his hut with his mother, and Miguel is given back his horse. He smiles as he rides past me, and I take his picture with my camera. Then he rides away.

After a while, I decide to go back to the ranch on my own. Martin is still busy, so I just start walking. It's not so hard; I just follow the road til it ends. But for some reason I stop about half-way home, go to the side of the road and sit on this slab of packed dirt. The foundation to some hut now long gone.

I'm sitting there, holding the photos even though I can't see them because the moon isn't out yet. I still don't know what went on. Was Miguel riding to the village to cause trouble, the logic of a drunk mind? Or was it an accident, and the trouble all started by the villagers? I was there, and I don't even know, and am not sure anyone does.

I don't see Martin in the dark until he is almost standing over me. He sits down quietly.

"Are you going to do the portrait?" he finally asks.

"No."

He reaches over and takes the two photos.

"Even the photos wouldn't capture it all," he finally says.

I don't answer, and Martin doesn't speak again. Then we are going home, back to the ranch. It will be the start of the fourth week in Honduras, and church services are held every Sunday under the oak tree where I draw. When Martin delivers his sermon tomorrow, he won't mention the name Diez or Miguel. ☼



## Tongueing

by R. Perrin Ehlinger

I don't remember what  
it was like.  
It seems so long ago  
like a pre-packaged pizza with frost bite,  
the flavor is lost  
to my tongue.  
But then, those taste buds  
were burned away,  
like a forgotten marshmallow  
left by a forgetful child,  
on a stick over a campfire.  
It is difficult  
to put a bandage  
on your tongue.  
It will slide off with the saliva  
every time you are hungry.  
So now I can eat nothing hot-  
nor too spicy,  
Excuse me if I seem a little cold.

## Welcome

by R. Perrin Ehlinger

If only I could return to the earth  
As pure as I was born  
As silent as an apple falling.  
With the smell of stained grass in denim,  
And the laughter of young children  
Touched with ego as light as the ether  
And larger than a mortgaged home.  
Surpassing this stage was always a dream -  
Blacktop bruises, detention halls,  
And the soured milk air of the foul cafeteria  
Where I could never finish my sandwich.

Now that I am here, so much to be said,  
Reliving a past after my own fashion,  
Killing those in my path with words typed

As cruel as the ones spat from their lips  
That meant less than a silicon chip  
Clicked on, clicked off, no difference.

But may the weight on their shoulders  
Age them less prideful of the task,  
As I admire the crumpled caryatid  
Of Rodan - never able to burden  
What has been given unrelenting.

So now in a state of cultured purity -  
A relearned innocence forced upon me  
So gallantly by weathered pride  
And past mistakes of love and friendship  
The only dirt of the earth I've found  
Where I'm welcome  
Is the one place I'd rather not be.



# **THE COMIC STRIP**

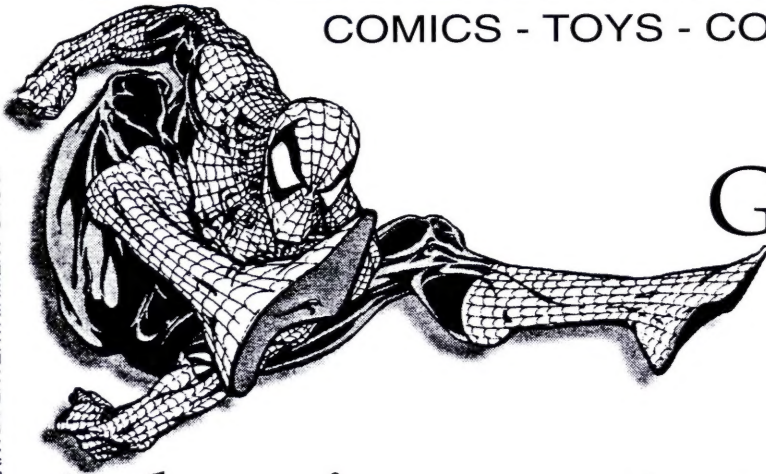
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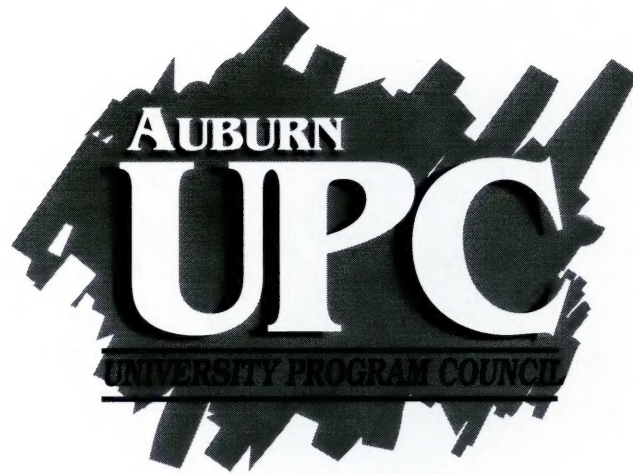
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